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Official Records

President: Mr. Oportti (Uruguay)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 37

Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development

Report of the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly on the Implementation of the Outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and Further Initiatives (A/53/45)

Report of the Secretary-General (A/53/211)

Note by the Secretary-General (A/53/210)

Draft decision (A/53/45, para. 87)

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): Before proceeding, I should like to inform members of the Assembly that in a letter dated 30 September 1998 addressed to me, the Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of Western European and other States for the month of September, requests that the General Assembly hear in plenary meeting a statement by the Observer of Switzerland on agenda item 37, "Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development".

Given the importance attached to the issue under discussion, it is proposed that the General Assembly should take a decision on that request.

May I take it that there is no objection to the proposal to hear a statement in plenary meeting by the Observer of Switzerland on this item?

It was so decided.

Mr. Wibisono (Indonesia): On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, I have the honour to address this plenary meeting of the General Assembly, which is convened to consider agenda item 37, entitled "Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development".

It is my distinct pleasure to begin by extending congratulations to you, Mr. President, on behalf of the Group, on your well-deserved election and to express our readiness to work together with you and the other members of the Bureau in successfully addressing the many issues on the agenda of the fifty-third session.

Let me also express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for the several reports he has issued on this agenda item and for his efforts to substantively achieve the goals set out in Copenhagen at the World Summit for Social Development.

Social development is one of the most critical issues of the day. It was, in fact, the great importance which the international community attaches to social development that prompted the convening of a summit-level meeting to consider its myriad aspects and complexities and to devise a common world strategy



which would lead to a general improvement in living conditions throughout the world. And, while the World Summit did succeed in strengthening resolve at the highest levels of government to find solutions to the perennial questions of poverty, unemployment and social integration and in translating that resolve into genuine, substantive and meaningful change, serious problems and obstacles nevertheless persist.

Three years have elapsed since Copenhagen. In two years' time the General Assembly will meet in a special session to assess how far we have come and what constraints have been encountered in follow-up activity. Yet at this point in time a discouraging trend is emerging whereby the enthusiasm so vocally expressed at the Summit is translating into little more than a superficial improvement in the human condition. Not only has the international community failed to move significantly forward since the World Summit, but the awesome force of globalization, which held such promise, is being squandered. It is not being harnessed for a decisive assault on poverty and unemployment and to end social exclusion, but rather is becoming yet another venue to press the advantage of the strong over the weak and to increase the gap between haves and have-nots.

The international community is now experiencing a slowdown in the growth of world output and trade, and stands at the brink of an economic abyss. At the same time, despite the pronouncements at the World Summit for Social Development, greater emphasis has been placed on anti-inflationary policies at the expense of those necessary for full employment. Within such a global environment, the goals of the World Summit for Social Development have become even more difficult to attain, particularly for the developing countries. It is therefore of great concern to the Group of 77 and China that the achievement of sustainable human development is becoming further removed from reality.

Today, in the absence of any substantial effort on the part of the international community to support its commitments with financial resources and development assistance, even the best efforts to eradicate poverty remain seriously hobbled. Three years after the World Summit, I am compelled to restate an old refrain: that a multilateral effort for development which includes a serious effort towards financing for development is urgently needed. In this regard, we can find some encouragement in the two-day high-level dialogue of the General Assembly, convened last month, which contributed to an increased awareness and understanding of the economic and social impact of

globalization and the need for international cooperation to effectively address the emerging global situation.

The Group of 77 and China readily accepted that globalization and market liberalization presented new and considerable opportunities to enhance national wealth equitably, to increase employment and to further integrate global society. However, the concept of development as a special part of the multilateral support system has been replaced by the laissez-faire approach to the globalized economy. And recent history has brought to life the risks and challenges that come with following a single doctrine, with a number of countries now experiencing economic downturns and others plunging into devastating economic crisis and recession.

The recent financial crisis that has wrought havoc in Asia and reverberated throughout the world clearly illustrates the need for the international community to strengthen its management role in the world economy. We need to establish surveillance and regulatory frameworks on short-term capital flows and trade in currencies, while at the same time allowing for the liberalization of economies at their own pace. On a broader level, the current state of the global economy has proved that the economic development and stability of developing countries is in the long-term interests of the more developed countries, and that the international community as a whole has a vested interest in the social and economic well-being of all its members, not merely a select few.

The Group would therefore draw attention to one important lesson learned which demands further consideration: that the social and economic development programmes of the developing countries need to proceed within the context of multilateral cooperation for development. We need to return to the Summit Programme of Action and approach critical development issues on a sound and predictable basis. Concurrent with our efforts to revive this process through such means as the North-South dialogue, we also recognize the need for the developing countries to broaden and intensify South-South cooperation. Of great importance in this regard is the Group of 77 initiative on a South summit, to be held prior to the Millennium Assembly in the year 2000.

Turning to the institutional level, let me note that we in the Group of 77 and China welcome the efforts that have been made through the United Nations to forge an international consensus which not only recognize existing problems but seek agreement on how best to solve them.

In this regard, we would like to commend the efforts that have been made within the Organization to promote an integrated and coordinated implementation and follow-up to all of the major international conferences in the social, economic and related fields. The activities of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, which established its thematic ad hoc inter-agency task forces, and the work of the Commission for Social Development, the Economic and Social Council and the newly created Department of Economic and Social Affairs is noteworthy. We are confident that these efforts will greatly contribute to the success of the special session in the year 2000.

Let me add also that we support the efforts of the Organization to formulate general guidelines and a common framework for national reporting. Certainly, national capacities to monitor and evaluate the progress made in implementing the Summit outcome must be enhanced. Equally important is an accurate and ongoing assessment of the global trends. The issuance by the Secretary-General of the report on the world social situation in time for consideration by the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session is therefore necessary. The Group would also join in requesting that the appropriate documentation be prepared by the Secretariat focusing on implementation of the World Summit commitments, particularly in the light of the current economic situation.

In closing, the Group of 77 and China would once again urge their developed country partners to join with it in genuine partnership based on mutual interests, common benefits and equitably shared responsibilities. The time for the international community to reduce poverty has long since passed; it should not merely echo the many cries for help. We in the Group will redouble our efforts for a strengthened role for the United Nations in promoting international cooperation for economic and social development, and, within our limited capacity, we will strive to implement the Declaration and Programme of Action. We will work within our means to undertake additional concrete work to move towards the goals set at Copenhagen.

Mr. Sucharipa (Austria): I have already on an earlier occasion had the opportunity to congratulate you, Mr. President, on the assumption of your high office. I reiterate today our pledge to work with you and all other delegations for a successful outcome of this session of the General Assembly.

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The Central and Eastern European countries

associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the associated country Cyprus, as well as the European Free Trade Association member of the European Economic Area — Iceland — align themselves with this statement.

I gladly take up the invitation just proffered by our colleague from Indonesia to engage in a genuine partnership, and in that regard let me comment briefly on the agenda item before us.

The outcome of the Social Summit represents a milestone in the process of defining social development as an important component of sustainable development. The Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action proclaim that the ultimate aim of development is to improve the quality of life of all people. The heads of State or Government gathered in Copenhagen stated that the goal of social integration should be a society for all in which people have the right and the ability to participate in decisions affecting their lives. The Copenhagen commitments place the individual human being at the centre of development and ask for particular efforts to empower people belonging to vulnerable groups in order to maximize their capacities, resources and opportunities. They enjoin Governments to ensure the equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all women and men. The Social Summit recognized that democracy and good governance are essential building blocks for meeting the objectives of sustainable development, prosperity and peace.

The commitments adopted by representatives of 186 States in Copenhagen remain as valid and as comprehensive today as when they were agreed. The European Union is fully committed to the implementation of the outcome of the Copenhagen Summit. We welcome the establishment of a preparatory process leading up to the special session of the General Assembly in the year 2000, dedicated to an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the outcome of the Summit.

We pledge our support for a constructive discussion on these issues involving regional groups, States and international organizations, as well as all other actors in the field of social development, to bring about a meaningful outcome of this important event. We stress that the participation of civil society in these debates, including the preparatory process, is crucial to ensure that an even broader range of views is heard. This will help enrich our discussion. An open exchange of views

on best practices and lessons learned, including of obstacles encountered, will allow strategies to emerge on ways to further implement the commitments and objectives agreed upon in Copenhagen.

Comprehensive and topical information provided on a voluntary basis by United Nations Member States on the progress made in the implementation of the outcome of the Copenhagen Summit — in addition to the information that is already available within the United Nations system — will be useful in this context. We are looking forward with interest to the general guidelines concerning the structure and common framework for national reporting.

The World Summit for Social Development was not an isolated event. Its outcome fed into and drew upon the targets, strategies and calls for action adopted by a great number of other United Nations world conferences and summits held in this decade. Taken together, the outcomes of these global conferences constitute a comprehensive development agenda with many cross-cutting themes. While the first responsibility for the implementation of the conference commitments lies with Governments, the United Nations system is an important instrument for helping them meet this challenge.

It is in this context that we wish to stress that both quantitative and qualitative data, benchmarks and internationally comparable indicators are needed to effectively monitor progress in the implementation of the outcome of the major United Nations conferences and summits, including the Social Summit. The European Union notes with interest that initiatives aiming at the elaboration of common indicators have been launched by, *inter alia*, the United Nations, the Bretton Woods institutions, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development/Development Assistance Committee and interested non-governmental organizations. We welcome the decision taken by the Economic and Social Council to devote an informal meeting in 1999 to the issue of basic indicators for the integrated and coordinated implementation and follow-up of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields. We are convinced that this meeting will stimulate better coordination of the ongoing initiatives within and outside the United Nations system.

The European Union also welcomes the decision taken by the Economic and Social Council to dedicate the high-level segment of its substantive session in 1999 to the role of employment and work in poverty eradication: the

empowerment and advancement of women. These issues figure prominently on the Copenhagen agenda.

Some days ago, on 1 October, we witnessed the official launching of the International Year of Older Persons, which will be observed in 1999. "Towards a society for all ages" was chosen as the overarching theme for this year in order to highlight the fact that aging is a multigenerational experience. Preparations for this year have been pushed forward with remarkable enthusiasm at the local, national and international levels. The organization of national committees, conferences, workshops, networks and media strategies, as well as the activities of the United Nations consultative group for the International Year of Older Persons, have stimulated interest and action in support of the year. The European Union notes with satisfaction that a gender perspective is increasingly integrated into the preparations of the year, thus fostering and deepening our understanding of the role, the rights and the needs of older women.

The European Union holds the view that the fight against poverty must be placed at the heart and in the mainstream of international development cooperation. The Union reaffirms its commitment to meeting the target of reducing the proportion of the world's population living in extreme poverty by 50 per cent by 2015. We believe that policies that aim at energizing the capacity of poor women and men to shape the processes and decisions that affect their lives will eventually enable them to lift themselves out of poverty. Poverty eradication strategies have to give particular attention to the specific constraints faced by women in exercising their rights, claiming resources and gaining equal access to quality education, health care and other basic social services. Furthermore, we believe that the path to social, economic and cultural progress is largely determined by the living conditions that are offered to the young generation. Social impact assessments should be undertaken in the design of all policies to ensure that all people, in particular the poorest and those with special needs — including children and persons with disabilities — can fully participate and benefit from them.

We believe that the support of the international community both at the bilateral and multilateral levels is essential in helping foster an environment in which Governments take the lead in assessing poverty situations and developing national poverty eradication strategies and programmes. The mobilization of financial resources for poverty eradication, including from private as well as from new and innovative sources, and a more determined

orientation of development cooperation to this goal need to be fully explored. The European Union remains concerned about the declining trend in total official development assistance. We recognize the continued importance of official development assistance and reiterate that efforts should be strengthened to achieve the agreed official development assistance target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product as soon as possible. We note the work that countries have undertaken in developing the 20/20 concept, and we are looking forward with interest to the outcome of the Hanoi conference that will be held on this issue this month.

The European Union maintains that an enterprising and inclusive society needs to give all citizens the opportunity to work and to contribute to broader economic and social development. We consider social protection as a productive factor and underline that economic reform has to be linked to social dialogue in order to enhance understanding and acceptance by all actors concerned. In keeping with the agreement reached at the Luxembourg jobs summit in November 1997, all 15 member States of the European Union submitted employment action plans to the Cardiff European Council in June this year. The new employment strategies focus on the following policy areas: enhancement of the employability of the active population, in particular of the young, the long-term unemployed and women; development of skills, training and lifelong learning; improvement of conditions for small and medium-sized enterprises and the self-employed; and, finally, strengthening the policies for equal opportunities between women and men as well as for people with disabilities.

The first ever World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth was convened at the invitation of the Government of Portugal and organized in cooperation with the United Nations in Lisbon last August. Representatives of some 140 countries, among them more than a hundred Ministers, discussed the broad range of youth-related issues, thereby intensifying cooperation between them. The Conference was preceded by the third session of the World Youth Forum of the United Nations System, which took place in Braga. This youth gathering was organized by the United Nations in partnership with the Portuguese National Youth Council. Both Conferences provided contributions to the further implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond.

With these and many similar activities the European Union and its member States wish to underscore their ongoing strong commitment to the results achieved in

Copenhagen three years ago and to their continued validity for the benefit of all humankind.

Mr. Shen Guofang (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): At the 1995 World Summit for Social Development leaders of various countries made solemn commitments with regard to the goals for social development and measures to reach such goals. Over the past three years since then, the international community has made great efforts and achieved positive progress in effectively implementing the outcome of the Summit. This is very heartening indeed.

The United Nations has now started preparations for the special session of the General Assembly on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and further initiatives, to be held in the year 2000. At the special session achievements made and lessons learned in the five years since 1995 will be reviewed, and plans will be made for social development in the new century. The Chinese delegation would like to make the following observations in this connection.

First, social development strategies reflecting the specific characteristics and national conditions of the country concerned should be implemented. Countries differ in their economic bases as well as their political systems and cultural traditions. The priorities of their social development and the difficulties they face vary even more. Therefore, we believe that in identifying the line of thought, methods and specific measures for social development countries should seek to implement effective social development strategies and plans that fit their national conditions.

Secondly, international cooperation should be strengthened. Developed countries should contribute even more to the promotion of the global social development process. One of the three main themes of the Summit was the eradication of poverty. This is also a priority issue facing the vast number of developing countries. It is true that national Governments should shoulder the main responsibilities in realizing the goals of the Summit, but international cooperation and support are crucial to helping the developing countries to wipe out poverty and speed up their social development.

Thirdly, the role of the United Nations, as well as of other international and regional organizations, should be strengthened. Since the beginning of the 1990s a number of international conferences on the question of development have been convened within the United

Nations system. The United Nations should play a central and coordinating role in implementing the follow-up activities. Specifically, the United Nations should mobilize and pool financial resources and promote technological cooperation. If the United Nations can do something concrete in these fields, that will be the most precious contribution to the implementation of the commitments made at the Summit.

China is a developing country with a population of 1.2 billion. It is faced with such formidable tasks as eliminating poverty, creating jobs and promoting social development. Since 1995 the Chinese Government has made tremendous efforts in implementing the commitments made at the Summit.

The Chinese Government has always made the elimination of poverty an important part of its programme for national economic and social development. The central Government strives to ensure resources input into this endeavour by earmarking funds and preferential loans for these areas every year. After years of untiring efforts, China's poverty-stricken population had been reduced from 80 million at the beginning of the 1990s to 50 million at the end of 1997. This summer China was hit by a huge flood, unparalleled in the past hundred years. A total of 21.2 million hectares of land was flooded and 223 million people were affected by the flood, which caused a direct economic loss of over \$20 billion dollars. This has made our poverty relief task even more formidable.

China is rich in labour resources. Due to the reform of State-owned enterprises and a major readjustment of the industrial mix in the transition from a planned economy to a socialist market economy, China is now facing severe challenges in the area of employment, which has been aggravated by the Asian financial crisis. The increasing numbers of laid off and unemployed workers are putting more pressure on the issue of employment. By the end of 1997, 12 million factory workers had been laid off. The re-employment of unemployed and laid off workers has become a hindrance to China's economic development. To solve this problem, the Chinese Government launched the "Re-employment Project", which calls upon enterprises, jobless individuals themselves and society to mobilize, to look for jobs and to create jobs. At the same time, a large number of new jobs are being created by building more infrastructure, expanding service industry, opening up small and medium-sized enterprises and developing community services. The Chinese Government is determined to try every means to keep the unemployment rate in the urban areas at around 3.5 per cent this year.

China is a multi-ethnic country. Enhancing social integration and promoting ethnic unity are crucial to social stability and social development. For ethnic minority areas the Chinese Government has instituted a regional autonomy system. It also gives vigorous support to the economic development of these regions, with a view to realizing the common progress of the whole of society. The Chinese Government also pays much attention to the livelihood and well-being of vulnerable groups, such as the young, the elderly and the disabled. It has formulated a series of policies and laws to protect their rights and interests, encouraging and helping them to participate in social life and share society's material and cultural achievements.

With the twenty-first century just around the corner, humanity is still faced with quite a number of difficulties and has a long way to go on the road to social development. The United Nations can play a more active and important role in this connection. Countries should strengthen their exchange and cooperation in the social development field. We should draw on past experience and take action to further promote sustained development around the globe.

Ms. Arystanbekova (Kazakhstan): The World Summit for Social Development was an important milestone in the history of the world community and was universally acknowledged as a forum which made a major contribution to solving the acute social problems that face mankind. At the same time, the ways proposed to solve these problems require further improvement, rationalization and adjustment to the real world economic situation.

It is therefore important, in our view, to further improve the ways of implementing the obligations assumed by Governments, stimulating active international and regional cooperation and disseminating positive experiences as important means of securing their implementation.

The delegation of Kazakhstan wishes to express its gratitude to the Secretary-General for the report he has submitted on the agenda item under consideration today. It contains new information on the implementation of the Summit's decisions by intergovernmental organs, including the Preparatory Committee for the special session of the General Assembly, the Commission for Social Development and the Economic and Social Council.

Moreover, while this information is important and useful from the standpoint of choosing optimal ways to solve existing problems, there is an urgent need for further, broader and more effective action at all levels to eliminate poverty, unemployment and social disintegration. The task is to come up with more effective and concrete initiatives for solving the problems identified at Copenhagen.

The delegation of Kazakhstan notes with satisfaction the activity of the three ad hoc inter-agency task forces established by the Administrative Committee on Coordination to develop a coordinated approach to follow-up of the global United Nations conferences, as well as the steady and comprehensive implementation at the country level of the policy recommendations adopted at these conferences and at the Copenhagen Summit. Undoubtedly, national mechanisms and structures will, in the future, have to take due account of the work of these groups, which have given additional impetus to activities to implement the decisions of the Summit.

I should also like to emphasize the important coordinating role assigned in this respect to the newly established Department of Economic and Social Affairs and its Division for Social Policy and Development. We, for our part, hope for fruitful cooperation with them in terms of the participation of national experts in the work of the seminars and workshops planned by the United Nations and their support for research projects, which will undoubtedly contribute to identifying the existing obstacles and methods of overcoming them more effectively in order to attain the goals of Copenhagen.

In our view, the work of the intergovernmental institutions, programmes and funds of the United Nations and its regional commissions, as well as of the international financial institutions, is highly commendable. Acting in accordance with their mandates, they have made an appreciable contribution to promoting productive employment, combating poverty, incorporating the gender element into development programmes, conducting the experimental phase of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, developing guidelines and initiatives with respect to social capital, and so on.

Also noteworthy are the positive role of the United Nations in promoting the socio-economic development of the Central Asian region and, in particular, the development by the Economic Commission for Europe and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific of the special programme for the economies of

Central Asia. The purpose of this programme is to assist the States of the region in intensifying their mutual cooperation and promoting economic growth and integration into the economies of the European and Asian countries.

Yet another concrete step in the implementation of the decisions of the World Summit for Social Development was the holding in Almaty in July this year, through the joint efforts of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Government of Kazakhstan, of the regional conference "Central Asia 2010: Economic and Social Development Prospects". The main purpose of the conference was to assess the progress of the reforms and identify the main problems and tasks of the countries with transition economies, including the eradication of poverty.

Kazakhstan is committed to the ideas of renewal and is carrying out radical economic transformations aimed above all at raising the standard of living of its people. The attainment of the goals of the World Summit for Social Development in Kazakhstan depends on how effectively and consistently these transformations will be implemented in the future.

On 30 September this year, the President of Kazakhstan, Mr. Nazarbaev, put forward a comprehensive programme of democratization, covering such important areas as elections, political parties, Parliament, civil society, the judicial system, the status of women and the mass media. Serious steps will be taken to resolve acute social problems, combat corruption and optimize the national administration. All of these measures are aimed at further protecting and guaranteeing the rights and freedoms of every citizen of our multi-ethnic society.

One of the main tasks Kazakhstan faces today is to create a broad and reliable system of protection for the economic system and the socio-economic health of Kazakhstan's population. In accordance with the programme, an Economic Policy Council has been set up on a permanent basis to agree on policy measures and respond promptly to any turn of events in the foreign countries affected by the economic crisis and in Kazakhstan itself so as to protect the banking system, economic agents, consumers and the economy as a whole from harm.

The Government of Kazakhstan has also developed new approaches to demarcating the budgetary sphere and

the entrepreneurial sector, drawing up and presenting a more transparent programme budget, and reforming social welfare mechanisms and new schemes for financing education and health care. A broad range of measures has been outlined, aimed at increasing employment and reducing unemployment levels.

The intention is to direct the resources of the State to programmes that promote economic growth and directly benefit the population in such areas as health care, education and vocational training. To ensure that the goals set are attained and the programmes adopted implemented in a coordinated manner, there are plans to organize the Government of the Republic on a better structured basis and to clarify the areas of activity and spheres of responsibility of its component parts, with compulsory subsequent accountability.

We are confident that these and other steps being taken in the context of the broad socio-economic and political reforms being conducted by the Government of Kazakhstan in the light of the recommendations of the World Summit for Social Development will yield positive results. We hope that these results will be useful to the work of the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly on the Implementation of the Outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and Further Initiatives.

Ms. Morgan-Moss (Panama) (*interpretation from Spanish*): It is an honour for the delegation of Panama, in its capacity as coordinator of the Rio Group, to make this statement on agenda item 37, "Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development".

First of all, the Rio Group would like to thank the Secretary-General and the relevant offices of the Secretariat for the note and the report presented on this subject, contained in documents A/53/210 and A/53/211. These documents will serve as a guide and will be very useful in our work.

The States members of the Rio Group wish to reaffirm once again in this forum their commitment to the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted at the World Summit for Social Development and endorsed, in General Assembly resolution 50/161 of 22 December 1995, as well as the importance they attach to the subject of social development in all its aspects.

This commitment has been actively undertaken as a matter of priority by the Rio Group. We are able to state

with satisfaction that in 1995 the Group adopted the Buenos Aires Declaration on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development, aimed at the regional implementation of the Copenhagen commitments.

The meetings of the heads of State or Government of the Rio Group, held in Bolivia and Paraguay in 1996 and 1997, respectively, reaffirmed regional determination to eradicate poverty and the conviction that a sustained process of economic and social development is fundamental for democratic stability and improvements in the population's standards of living.

Similarly, at the last meeting of the heads of State or Government of the Rio Group, held in Panama on 4 and 5 September 1998, the Group emphasized that political and economic progress in our region must be reflected in a lessening of social inequality. It also expressed the conviction that productive transformation will be sustainable over time only if we achieve higher levels of equity.

In addition to making a political commitment to this item, Latin America has defined in the São Paulo Consensus concrete actions to achieve the objectives set forth in the Declaration and Programme of Action of the Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development. In resolution 52/25, the General Assembly welcomed the Consensus, to which the Rio Group reiterates its full support and adherence.

We also welcome the results of the thirty-sixth session of the Commission for Social Development, whose agreed conclusions on the item, on "promoting of social integration and participation of all people, including disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and persons", must be used as a guide by Governments to adopt measures at the local, national, regional and international levels in the area of social promotion, under the mediation of responsible Governments.

Mr. Mra (Myanmar), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The Rio Group takes this opportunity to thank the Chairman of the Commission for Social Development, Mr. Aurelio Fernández, for the important and professional job he has done this year, which has made it possible for the Commission to perform its work efficiently and in new ways. The Rio Group looks forward with optimism to the thirty-seventh session of the Commission. The items "Social services for all" and

"Initiation of the overall review of the implementation of the outcome of the Summit" will be of great importance in the review of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, planned for the year 2000. The latter item is particularly important because it defines areas in which new initiatives should be taken to promote the implementation of the Copenhagen agreements.

We give our full support to the work of the Preparatory Committee for the special session of the General Assembly on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and further initiatives. The Rio Group believes that the main objectives to be pursued during the preparatory process and in the year 2000 were clearly established at the first meeting of the committee, which was presided over by the representative of a member State of our Group. Particularly important is the decision of the preparatory committee that the special session will have the primary tasks of reaffirming the commitments agreed on at Copenhagen and of recommending concrete action to be taken at the national and international levels that will make possible the full implementation of the commitments entered into at the Social Summit. In this regard, the members of the Rio Group will devote all their efforts and creativity to placing individuals and people at the heart of development.

In that context, we attach special importance to participation by civil society, including non-governmental organizations and the private sector, both in the preparatory process and at the special session of the General Assembly in the year 2000. The contribution of these sectors will be vital if the conclusions of the review process are to have a high degree of realism.

Similarly, the Rio Group takes note of the generous offer of the Government of Switzerland to host, in Geneva, the special session of the General Assembly on the implementation of the outcome of the Social Summit and the review of further initiatives in the year 2000. We hope we will be able to contribute to the reaching of a consensus so that the Assembly will be able to adopt a decision in this regard.

Today, the world is in a difficult period characterized by a number of prominent factors, both positive and negative, whose coexistence, naturally, is confusing to the average citizen. For that reason, all Governments must make all efforts necessary to restore tranquillity to its people and enable them to create a more just and equitable society without any kind of social exclusions. The Rio Group is prepared to commit all its efforts to this task,

which requires commitment, imagination, unity and idealism.

Ms. Montoya (United States of America): I would like first to review briefly what the United States has accomplished to achieve the objectives set at the Copenhagen Summit: alleviating poverty, creating jobs and effecting social integration. I will then concentrate my remarks on our views on the challenges to our work in the future.

The United States is committed to the goals of the Copenhagen Summit of 1995. We have made substantial progress to strengthen the family unit by initiating programmes to connect fathers to children, and to develop work skills to reduce dependency with welfare-to-work projects. We have increased education funding with federal investments and have endeavoured to set new educational standards. We have enhanced our health care policies to reduce infant mortality and to establish indicators of child well-being. We have adopted policies to renew our communities and to reduce crime with such innovative projects as neighbourhood development grants.

Our Government has worked closely with various domestic and international non-governmental organizations to promote civil society, create a social atmosphere of tolerance and compassion and integrate into our communities those who have been marginalized because of their race, gender, age or physical disability.

United States Government policies have resulted in expanding employment and in reforming the social welfare systems in our country. The progress in these two areas has contributed substantially to raising the living standards of ordinary American citizens.

According to the most recent United States Census Bureau report, in 1997 the income of the typical American household rose at twice the rate of inflation, and the percentage of people in poverty declined.

We still need to ensure that all members of our society participate in and enjoy the benefits of this economic growth. We are endeavouring to create a more equitable social system to include minorities, women, youth, the elderly and people with disabilities. We have increased the minimum wage and are addressing the issue of falling real wages in some sectors of our economy. We have undertaken health insurance reform to increase the welfare of working individuals and families.

I would now like to present our views on the future challenges. Since the Copenhagen Summit, the objective of the United States has remained the same: to work towards the eradication of extreme poverty through sustainable development. This means, of course, economic growth and investment in social development while respecting the environment. Respect for human rights, the protection of children and the empowerment of women are essential to that end.

One of the most serious challenges facing us continues to be that of living up to the Copenhagen commitment to place people at the centre of development in a globalized economy.

As we work together to overcome the current financial crisis, we cannot neglect social development. While economies adjust, readjust and grow, Governments and international organizations must accord high priority to identifying policies which hurt the poor. Public policies must enhance people's lives, increase their earning power and protect the most vulnerable from the negative impact of essential adjustments with well-targeted safety nets.

When we review our work towards achieving the Copenhagen objectives, we must place priority on important social issues such as family, education, health, safety and crime. We believe good governance is the key to achieving these objectives.

Governance is a critical issue that needs to be addressed at international as well as national levels. Democratic elections, the rule of law and transparency in political processes are the necessary conditions for the governed to have a say in government. We believe that an active civil society constitutes an important part of good governance. Civil society will also contribute to safeguarding civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights. A vibrant civil society should include the social and economic groupings that represent the society's interests.

Another key element of our work towards achieving the Copenhagen objectives is education. Rapid advances in technology have placed a premium on new skills, new knowledge and, above all, the ability to adapt and learn. We must invest more in educating our children so they will have the basic training to keep up with these advances. We must also encourage working people to engage in continuous training to find new and better paying jobs, so they can earn a living wage. Governments and the private sector play important roles in accomplishing these goals.

We believe that the worst forms of poverty should be eliminated from the face of the earth by early in the next century. We must pay great attention to problems of severe malnutrition, unsafe drinking water and inadequate levels of sanitation and health care, including family planning and reproductive health care.

Despite the recent financial crises, the developing world has made great strides in reducing the worst symptoms of poverty: infant mortality, illiteracy, disease and starvation. Much, of course, remains to be achieved.

We must pay particular attention to women. We must recognize that women perform a disproportionate share of "unwaged" labour, such as child-rearing and family farming. We must make sure that their labour, is valued, that they have equal access to essential services such as education and health care and that they participate fully in the political, economic and social life of their communities.

We must provide equal opportunities for girls to receive an education, to participate in all aspects of society and to achieve success in any endeavour they choose. No doors should be closed to anyone.

We must also pay attention to the impact of globalization on older persons and on the disabled. We need to find ways to expand their participation in the process of globalization and to prevent them from falling victim to the new global trends.

Today, globalization has brought opportunities as well as challenges to the world. We must make solid progress on the important social issues I have outlined in order to take advantage of the opportunities to achieve sustainable social and economic development.

Finally, as we look towards meeting in Geneva in mid-2000 for the five-year review of the World Summit for Social Development, Member States and non-governmental organizations must recommit themselves to a global effort to achieve the goals set in Copenhagen.

Mr. Lee See-young (Republic of Korea): The 1995 World Summit for Social Development presented the international community with a unique opportunity to reformulate the concept of development. Human dignity and welfare have been integrated into the idea of development as its major components. Indeed, the Summit has served as a catalyst in moving the

international community towards human-centred development.

Since the Summit, Governments, international organizations, and non-governmental organizations have endeavoured to implement the commitments agreed upon in Copenhagen. Thus far, we have seen a number of positive outcomes and activities in this important area, with the ever growing involvement of civil society and the private sector at national, regional and international levels.

While a great deal more remains to be done, unfortunately the international economic crisis has struck the world economy, making our endeavours even harder. It has considerably undermined the political will and ability of many Governments to carry out their commitments in this field.

It is particularly regrettable that the hardest hit by the current crisis are the most vulnerable segments of populations: the unemployed, low-income families, the elderly, women and children. Without proper social safety nets in place, human suffering can reach devastating levels. A more daunting aspect of this crisis is the real danger that the progress many of these countries have so far accomplished in poverty reduction could be undone. Any economic readjustment programme of the Governments affected by the current crisis should address the problems of poverty, unemployment and social disintegration. Moreover, long-term development objectives must never be forgotten.

Under these circumstances, it has become all the more important for the international community to reaffirm its strong will and determination to fulfil the objectives of the Social Summit. My delegation therefore appreciates this opportunity to address the agenda item under discussion today.

Allow me to share, in this context, the Republic of Korea's experiences in its process of social development over the past four decades.

Since the very beginning of our economic development, in the 1960s and 1970s, my Government has attached great importance to poverty eradication. A great deal of investment was put into building infrastructure, creating labour-intensive projects, promoting export-oriented industries and providing education. In the 1980s the focus was on the creation of high-quality jobs. As a result of these successive policies, the Republic of Korea

was able to achieve an unprecedented level of economic growth in a very short period of time.

In this process, however, intrinsic weaknesses became evident in Korea's economic and social structure, which contributed to an increasing desire for a more equitable society and a more representative political system. The 1990s therefore augured the introduction of policies oriented to greater social justice and social integration. Unfortunately, it was precisely when the benefits of these social integration policies began to emerge that the recent financial crisis hit the Republic of Korea. Indeed, we are now faced with large-scale lay-offs, negative economic growth for the first time, after three decades of sustained growth at an average rate of 7 per cent per annum, and a decrease of per capita income due to the sharp increase of the foreign exchange rate.

Although the current crisis has caused unprecedented economic difficulties, my Government is committed to continuing to strengthen the social safety net. In this connection, my Government has opted to run a budget deficit, for the first time in many years, to provide the needed funds for consolidating the social security system.

With these financial means at its disposal, my Government has reinforced its welfare policy and unemployment assistance to vulnerable groups. A revised Presidential Decree of Employment Insurance, beginning 1 October 1998, is meant to subject all workplaces to the application of employment insurance. Also, the finalization of the Enforcement Decree on Employment Insurance will permit employers who keep their workers during the structural reform process to receive subsidies for one year.

For the low-income unemployed, livelihood protection is assured by governmental support for subsistence costs, tuition assistance and medical expenses. Income support is provided with the goal of improving the self-help abilities of the unemployed. At the local level, in an effort to alleviate the sufferings of the unemployed, provincial governments are providing temporary jobs to those who wish to earn wages until a permanent job is obtained.

The Government has also been providing various vocational training programmes for unemployed workers and for workers suffering from job insecurity. We expect that these programmes will allow participants not only to find new jobs, but also to prepare themselves for more sophisticated jobs.

In the area of unemployment, President Kim Dae-jung initiated substantive negotiations among the representatives of labour, business and Government, which enabled them to launch the first phase of the Tripartite Commission in January this year. The principal objective of this Commission was to work out an agreement which would govern the labour-business relationship in the months to come, with a view to fairly sharing the burden of the economic crisis. The most significant development in this process is that, for the first time in Korea's trade union history, all labour movements are involved in the current negotiations — a significant step forward towards economic recovery and social integration. Through the Commission, labour, business and Government have committed themselves to the faithful implementation of all aspects of economic programmes included in the International Monetary Fund (IMF) reform package. The second phase of the Tripartite Commission's work was set in motion in June. The major economic actors in the Commission will continue to have close consultations, with a view to finding a consensus approach and integrating public opinion in the common effort to surmount the economic crisis.

Globalization has become the most important socio-economic phenomenon of this generation. It has permitted many economies to thrive over the past decades, opening doors of opportunity. However, globalization has proved to have its shortcomings and weaknesses, particularly in the area of social development. While an increasingly globalized world has brought many developing countries into the economic mainstream, the least developed countries, including many sub-Saharan African countries, have been further marginalized. In addition, the recent Asian financial crisis has made it all too clear that rapid globalization, without proper management, could seriously erode economies and their social integration processes. Indeed, the world needs to respond collectively to maximize its benefits and minimize its risks. As was agreed at the recent high-level dialogue on the impact of globalization, a new global partnership must be established, ensuring the more active participation of the developing world. In this global partnership, the United Nations is expected to play a leading role in promoting a constructive dialogue among all the actors concerned on the effect of globalization, particularly in the field of social development.

The key philosophy long espoused by President Kim Dae-jung is that democracy and free market principles are inseparable. Based upon such a philosophy, the Government of the Republic of Korea will continue to make determined efforts for accelerated socio-economic

reform and further social integration in the struggle to overcome the current economic difficulties and, in the long run, to realize a truly democratic, market-oriented and socially secure economy. In the meantime, we remain actively committed to supporting the United Nations and the international community in their common endeavour to work towards poverty eradication and social justice. In this connection, the Assembly can be assured of the full support and active participation of the Korean Government in the preparatory work for the success of the special session of the General Assembly on social development in the year 2000.

Mr. Larrain (Chile) (*interpretation from Spanish*):

It is an honour and a pleasure to address the General Assembly on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development, on behalf of the countries of the Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR) and associated countries: Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, Bolivia and Chile.

My comments are intended to supplement the excellent statements on this subject made by Indonesia on behalf of the Group of 77, and by Panama, on behalf of the Rio Group.

The international community is anxiously witnessing turbulence in the financial markets that is threatening to produce a global economic recession and consequent social crisis. Globalization is today acknowledged as a source of risk. However, not very long ago it was celebrated as a source of opportunity for all nations, particularly the smallest. Globalization and liberalization have certainly shown themselves to be realities that bring both benefits and risks to which all nations and the international community must know how to react, mainly so that we can take advantage of market forces for everyone's benefit. We must never forget that development must be at the service of individuals.

In order to deal with the insecurity of the present global economic and social situation, we must derive strength from the great international consensus represented by the World Summit for Social Development. Today more than ever we must reaffirm the political commitment reflected in the Declaration and Programme of Action endorsed by the Summit.

The Copenhagen commitments have been described as a new social contract at the global level because they place the individual at the centre of development. This is a fair assessment of the value of the Social Summit.

Today we can add that, within the cycle of United Nations economic and social conferences in the 1990s, it represents the consensus of the international community on how best to respond to the risks of globalization and channel the dynamic forces of globalization for the benefit of everyone.

In this sense, it is important to state that the Summit commitments are the commitments of all — both developed and developing countries. The social problems of poverty, exclusion and unemployment are universal. We therefore all committed ourselves in Copenhagen to put the economy at the service of individuals. The commitment of the developed world is to stand by the developing world, but also to implement the Summit commitments in its own societies, just as the developing countries bound themselves to do the same in theirs. One of the strengths of the Social Summit is that there is not a single North and a single South. The southern part of the North counts and the northern part of the South also counts in this new social contract.

The Preparatory Committee for the special session in the year 2000, Copenhagen +5, a Committee which Chile is proud to chair, recently adopted as its primary objective to reaffirm and not to renegotiate what was agreed at the Social Summit. This is a fundamental starting point for the Committee, which our countries firmly support, because the Social Summit agreements are an appropriate response by the international community to globalization.

The Preparatory Committee proceeds on the assumption that Copenhagen plus five cannot be a discussion about concepts or negotiation regarding texts. It must be about action that can be taken at the national, regional or global level to ensure that the commitments of our Heads of State and Government in 1995 become a reality in the lives of nations and individuals to eradicate poverty, create full employment and prevent social marginalization. Today, our job is to promote the full and faithful implementation of the Copenhagen commitments, evaluating the progress made and the difficulties to be overcome at all levels — local, national, regional and international.

The countries of MERCOSUR and associated countries give their complete support to the decision of the Preparatory Committee that the prime aim of Copenhagen +5 must be to identify and promote new initiatives and action to ensure that the Social Summit commitments are implemented. At the same time, we think it appropriate that this task be focused on the 10 commitments of the Copenhagen Declaration.

Similarly, we think that to achieve a successful General Assembly session able to launch concrete new initiatives, it must be open to all relevant actors. It must have the capacity to stimulate the imagination and sense of collective responsibility of all those active in the area of social development — parliaments, political parties, organizations of civil society, religious leaders, financial institutions, local authorities and the media. Ideally, this special session of the General Assembly will result in these actors' also taking initiatives within their own fields of action to complement and reinforce the measures we adopt during the special session.

The Commission for Social Development will begin its work this year looking forward to the special session in the year 2000, seeking the best way to carry out its fundamental task of examining national reports and identifying sectors where new initiatives are necessary in order to ensure compliance with the Copenhagen commitments. In this task our delegations will give it their full support.

This is not the time to go into the details of how best to proceed with preparations for the special session. This will be discussed at the first substantive meeting of the Preparatory Committee in May, but we wish to emphasize that among the matters to be decided two are fundamental: first, the criteria regarding promoting and identifying new actions and initiatives and how best to move forward in compliance with the 10 Copenhagen commitments; and, secondly, the participation of civil society and non-governmental organizations at the special session. We are confident that these matters will be resolved by consensus.

Finally, it must be stressed that this Assembly has a responsibility to decide on the place and date for the special session, Copenhagen +5. In our opinion, these are decisions that require the maximum consensus, and they must be adopted on the basis of a single criterion: the place and date which will ensure its greatest success.

We believe that the Swiss Government's generous offer of Geneva as the location deserves serious consideration, *inter alia* because Geneva gives the possibility that Copenhagen +5 will have an impact that might be lacking at Headquarters in New York, where so many other events will take place in the year 2000. The nature of Geneva as an important United Nations centre is another factor that should be taken into account.

Mr. Rastam (Malaysia): My delegation wishes to associate itself with the statement made earlier by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. I also wish to express my delegation's sincere appreciation to the Secretary-General for his reports on this agenda item.

Three core issues were deliberated upon at the 1995 World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen: the enhancement of social integration, particularly of the more disadvantaged and marginalized groups; the alleviation and reduction of poverty; and the expansion of productive employment. The participating Governments committed themselves to implementing the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action for social development. Within two years the special session to review the implementation of those commitments will be held. We are happy to note that preparations have begun for the review, including the finalization of a world poverty report by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). While not wishing to prejudge what the atmosphere will be like in the year 2000, my delegation sincerely hopes that the enthusiasm and optimism prevailing at Copenhagen will still be maintained at the special session. Malaysia pledges its full cooperation in ensuring the session's success.

The subject which we are deliberating upon today is of paramount importance not only to the developing countries, but also to the developed nations. The issues require continuous dialogue and cooperation. Three years after the Summit the implementation and follow-up to the commitments made in Copenhagen remain unsatisfactory. The human condition has barely improved in many parts of the world. Today there are more than 1.3 billion people still living in abject poverty, struggling to survive on less than a dollar a day. The global unemployment rate has not shown any sign of significant improvement. Indeed, unemployment may have been on the increase quite significantly in recent months, given the effects of economic slowdown, political turmoil and unprecedented natural disasters experienced by many developing countries.

Poverty is still pervasive in the developing countries. This grim situation has been further exacerbated by the unexpected financial crisis and the economic recession currently facing a number of these countries. Countries that until one year ago had progressed well, maintaining respectable rates of growth and instituting sound economic and social policies and programmes, are now seeing their hard-earned achievements undermined by devalued currencies, depleted capital markets, erosion of investor

confidence and economic and social regression arising from unbridled market activities, including those of currency speculators. Those Governments are now increasingly hard pressed to meet their social obligations. Their capacity to fulfil their commitments to the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, unfortunately, has been affected in many ways.

In view of the current situation, international solidarity and cooperation are most urgently required. The negative impact of globalization and market liberalization is being increasingly felt worldwide. The world may be teetering on the edge of a global recession. If no serious measures are taken by all concerned, we may even slide into a global depression. A serious effort has to be made, first, to review and restructure the international financial architecture and, secondly, to support the various commitments already made, through a greater flow of financial resources and development assistance. The relevant issues could be addressed appropriately in ongoing discussions at the United Nations and within the Bretton Woods institutions, as well as in the context of an international conference on financing for development. My delegation welcomes the discussions currently being held in Washington.

In order to achieve the goals of social development, of which the eradication of poverty is a central element, the international community has to work seriously towards ensuring that much needed resources can be channelled to the development efforts of the developing countries. The developed countries should make every effort to meet the target of allocating 0.7 per cent of their gross national product to official development assistance.

The efforts of many developing countries, especially heavily indebted poor countries, in uplifting the quality of life of their peoples, are still largely hampered by their external debt burden. External debt servicing eats away at meagre resources which could otherwise be used to cater for urgent needs such as infrastructure development, basic services, education and health. Therefore, there is an urgent need for new financial flows to be channelled to debtor developing countries through concessional financial assistance and foreign investments.

Sound policies and strategies are needed to reduce poverty and create new, productive employment opportunities. This task can never be handled single-handedly by Governments alone. Non-governmental organizations and the private sector can make a positive contribution through partnership with Governments at

both the national and the international levels. Their efforts would indeed complement the efforts of Governments in meeting the necessary social responsibilities and obligations.

My delegation welcomes the efforts made by the Secretariat to ensure integrated and coordinated implementation of the outcomes of the United Nations international conferences in the area of social development. We note in particular the work of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, including the establishment of three thematic ad hoc inter-agency task forces, on basic social services for all, on full employment and sustainable livelihoods, and on an enabling environment for economic and social development. We also commend the Department for Economic and Social Affairs for its work in this area. My delegation looks forward to the General Assembly considering at this session the decisions taken by the Preparatory Committee for the special session during its organizational session last May. My delegation supports the recommendation of the Committee that the special session should reaffirm and not renegotiate the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, review implementation so far, and recommend concrete actions and further initiatives. We also support the decisions made on issues to be addressed at future sessions of the Preparatory Committee, in coordination with the Commission for Social Development, on the role of the United Nations system, the mobilization of voluntary resources and the participation of non-governmental organizations.

The General Assembly has deliberated on this agenda item at the last three sessions. Clearly, fulfilment of the Copenhagen commitments will not be an easy task. But it will be possible if political will and resources can be effectively combined, bringing together all concerned with a renewed sense of purpose and urgency. My delegation hopes to be able to make a useful contribution to the current and future consideration of this item.

Mr. Carranza Cifuentes (Guatemala) (*interpretation from Spanish*): For the third year running, the General Assembly is considering this item, which is of special importance to my country because of the major contribution of this year's report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development, and especially because of the work of intergovernmental bodies in anticipation of the convening of a special session of the General Assembly on this item in the year 2000.

The year 2000 special session will be convened to conduct a comprehensive study and evaluation of the implementation of the outcome of the Summit; in the view of my delegation, convening that session is the most important item that will be considered in the coming months. It is important because of the subject matter, which — like extreme poverty and the effects of globalization, among other issues — has a significant impact on developing countries.

We also welcome the decision of the Economic and Social Council to engage, in 1999, in a comprehensive consideration of the question of the eradication of poverty with a view to making a contribution to the special session.

The work in May 1998 of the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly on the Implementation of the Outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and Further Initiatives resulted in interesting proposals that will have to be considered in depth. In that connection, we take note of the proposal that the special session should take place at the United Nations Office at Geneva; this would give the special session the political impact needed to achieve the agreed goals with a view to intensifying efforts to achieve full and effective implementation of the outcome of the World Summit. We are optimistic about the proposal of the Government of Switzerland on economic assistance for developing countries requesting it so that those which cannot afford to go to Geneva will still be properly represented at the special session.

The conclusions adopted at the thirty-sixth session of the Commission for Social Development on promoting social integration and participation of all people, including disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and persons, give rise to thought concerning the level of participation of various organizations, institutions and social groups that have not been sufficiently taken into account but that could work with great enthusiasm and loyalty on the social problems afflicting the nations of the world. Such popular participation could lead to the creation of the machinery needed to ensure that society itself is capable of achieving its social development goals and that the progress that is made will also be sustainable.

In Guatemala, the Government's policies to promote social development are aimed at combating extreme poverty. Directing public spending towards priority social sectors and geographical areas is necessary in order to

achieve the desired result. In this connection, the General Secretariat for Economic Planning, which is charged with supporting governmental action to combat extreme poverty, acts as the coordinator of the technical commissions charged with drawing up a proposal for interorganizational coordination enabling increasing investment in productive projects in the rural areas of our country.

Moreover, we have begun a process of coordination with the National Institute for Statistics and the Ministers of State to follow up the social policies established as part of the Plan for Social Development and Peace-building (PLADES) by identifying a series of social indicators and by formulating implementation mechanisms to guarantee reliable and timely information.

General drafting guidelines are necessary in order to present the Secretary-General with national reports on the implementation of the objectives and commitments entered into at the World Summit. It is also necessary to have a common framework for the presentation of these reports on the progress that has been made in the field and the obstacles that have been encountered along the way. These guidelines will help countries by giving them the technical assistance they need to present their reports in a uniform manner.

With regard to Guatemala itself, the collaboration of the United Nations system during the experimental stage of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework is an excellent opportunity to draw up joint country-by-country evaluations that the organs and institutions involved do on studies of sectoral support for the financing of basic social services. In this connection, my Government supports the Assistance Framework in actions to that end, actions which, among other things, attempt to raise the national capacity to collect and analyze data on the expenses associated with the 20/20 Initiative and to promote coordination within the United Nations system in the fight to eradicate poverty in general.

Furthermore, my delegation takes note with satisfaction of the annual report prepared by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the *Social Panorama of Latin America 1997*. That report evaluates the most important aspects of social development in the region, especially those related to social equity. My delegation is convinced anew that the work being done by regional commissions plays an important role in regional evaluations of social issues.

Finally, given the growing participation of non-governmental organizations in the work of the Commission for Social Development, and bearing in mind that their participation ought to be directed in such a way that they make a significant contribution to the work of the Commission and that, among other things, these organizations help to make civil society more aware and sensitive to complementary activities through seminars, conferences and symposiums, it is necessary to draft rules and regulations that will govern their participation in the special session.

Even though we have a long way to go and the problems of poverty and social inequality persist, we must continue with our commitment to determine what further initiatives will be the most effective in advancing the goals set out in Copenhagen.

Mr. Nejad-Hosseini (*Islamic Republic of Iran*): My delegation wishes to associate itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The World Summit for Social Development represents the actual advent of a continuing campaign at the global level towards a better common comprehension of the various elements involved in the social development of modern societies. The Summit, while underlining the significance of social development and human well-being for all, emphasized that our societies must respond more effectively to the material and spiritual needs of individuals, their families and their communities.

It is encouraging to note that the General Assembly decided to convene in the year 2000 a special session for the overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the outcome of the Summit and established a Preparatory Committee to undertake and facilitate the organizational and substantive preparations for the session. We were active in the process leading to Copenhagen and in Copenhagen itself and are pleased to participate actively in and contribute to the preparatory process for the appraisal of the implementation of the outcome of the Summit. We are also encouraged by the deliberations of the Preparatory Committee in its organizational session to address organizational as well as substantive issues of the review session, particularly that the main purpose of the special session would be to reaffirm and not to renegotiate the outcome of the Summit.

We believe that the review conference should focus on the realistic assessment of the degree of implementation of the Copenhagen outcome, including the 10 commitments, with particular emphasis on the three core issues, at the national, regional and international levels.

We welcome and commend the role of the Commission for Social Development and its secretariat in the preparatory process, in which it has been designated to act as the forum for national reporting and for identifying areas for further initiatives. The priority themes for next session of the Commission will contribute to the preparatory process. We will await with keen interest the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the 10 commitments, including the three core issues, and the report of the world social situation due to be submitted to the Commission in the year 2000. As for the venue of the special session, my delegation takes note of the generous offer of the Government of Switzerland to host the special session in Geneva.

Let me now turn to some substantive issues which we consider to be of importance for the preparatory process and the special session. While we all are committed to carry out the outcome of the Summit at the national level, the question of genuine international cooperation is a serious matter and needs to be addressed in earnest. In this context, we all remember that one of the most important discussions during the World Summit for Social Development was the exploration of new and innovative resources of financing for poverty alleviation programmes and social development.

We believe that national efforts and resources will not suffice to permit the achievement of the goals of the Summit, particularly in the fields of eradication of poverty and creation of employment. With an eye to the consequences and negative impacts of the still unfolding processes of globalization and liberalization on the developing societies, the preparatory process for the review session should seek new and innovative approaches to these twin processes. The Agenda for Development and the notion of the right to development should be looked at in dealing with the concept of social development.

We all agree that the ultimate objective of social development is to help countries to establish a sound, stable and well-functioning social system. Therefore, we should take a new look at the notion of development. For us, development, as a process contributing to the progress and well-being of societies, should be in harmony and consistent with the nature of the human being and the

culture and values of societies. In this context, we believe that paragraphs 28 and 29 of the Copenhagen Declaration constitute the theoretical basis and the umbrella for the commitments of the Declaration. We consider it important to underline that there is no universal method of promoting social integration and full participation and that cultural, ideological and philosophical diversity at the international level should be respected.

My delegation is pleased to note the role of values in the advancement of human societies. We firmly believe that values are important elements in shaping policies and attitudes and an enabling environment for social development in each society. In this connection, we emphasize that the ultimate objective of social development is to assist societies to develop a humane social structure and relations within their own cultural, ideological and philosophical parameters. We look forward to sharing these ideas with other delegations in the course of deliberations in the review process of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action.

In conclusion, I should like to assure you, Mr. President, of the commitment of my delegation to actively participate in and contribute to the two-year process of preparing for the special session on the appraisal and review of the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration.

Mr. Mangoela (Lesotho): This statement is being made on behalf of the member States of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) — Angola, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

At the outset, permit me, on behalf of these countries, to join previous speakers in commending Mr. Didier Opertti for the able manner in which he continues to preside over the work of the fifty-third session of the General Assembly of the United Nations. Our congratulations go also to other members of the Bureau. We wish to assure Mr. Opertti of the full cooperation of the SADC member States in the discharge of the heavy responsibility entrusted to him. Let me further take this opportunity to congratulate his predecessor, Mr. Hennadiy Udovenko, the former Foreign Minister of Ukraine, for the able manner in which he guided the work of the fifty-second session of the General Assembly.

SADC would like to associate itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

We would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report entitled "Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development" (A/53/211). We have also noted with appreciation the report of the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly on the Implementation of the Outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and Further Initiatives (A/53/45).

The Preparatory Committee held its organizational session here in New York in May this year. SADC is emphatic that the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action should not be renegotiated. We agree with the recommendations of the Preparatory Committee that the preparatory meetings need to ensure the participation of high-level Government officials, especially ministers, who would be in a position to propose key policy and practical recommendations for consideration by the Preparatory Committee.

SADC also welcomes the invitation by the Preparatory Committee to the Governments to contribute to the Trust Fund for the Follow-up to the World Summit set up to support the participation of the least developed countries in the work of the Preparatory Committee and the special session. Furthermore, we have also taken note with appreciation of the offer of the Government of Switzerland to host the special session in the year 2000. In this respect we also take note of the practical implications of the offer as contained in the Secretary-General's note (A/53/210). We therefore look forward to further consultations on this issue.

SADC is pleased to note that most Member States continue to report to the United Nations on measures taken at the national level to implement the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development. However, we believe that further concrete measures need to be taken to facilitate the implementation of the Summit's goals.

We have to continue to address various issues of social development, particularly the three core issues: poverty eradication; the expansion of productive employment and the reduction of unemployment; and social integration. Above all, we have to build on what we achieved in Copenhagen. The success of the Copenhagen commitments requires the joint effort of Governments and of grass-roots and non-governmental organizations working

in close partnership towards the same objectives. In this respect, SADC wishes to emphasize that in pursuing the Summit goals, all actors should base their initiatives on the cross-cutting themes of the global conferences: poverty eradication, gender mainstreaming, the enabling environment and human rights.

The SADC member States have expanded the provision of basic social services, particularly basic health and education facilities. They are striving to promote social integration by establishing country-wide administrative structures in order to achieve grass-roots participation and widen the decision-making base. But the economic reforms embraced by the SADC States have compelled Governments to reduce expenditures on these activities. As a result there is now a decrease in school enrolment, and the delivery of essential services to the poor has also been drastically affected, as have the health and food production sectors.

We met in Copenhagen impelled by the need to alleviate human suffering. There, we all heard the heartrending chronicles of facts and figures that depicted the wretchedness, poverty and marginalization of an unacceptably high percentage of the human race. In this generation, which has known and experienced unprecedented affluence, it is disquieting to live with the current high rate of the world's population mired in abject poverty. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that the sources of conflict, armed or unarmed, have shifted towards economic, social and environmental issues, with more conflicts now arising within States than between or among them. In Africa, for example, we have a large number of intra-State conflicts that have their root cause in the scarcity of resources.

Eradication of poverty remains a priority goal for all developing countries and SADC is concerned that there continues to be a steady increase in the number of people living under unacceptable conditions of poverty, mostly in developing and the least developed countries. We consider it most unfortunate that women have to bear a disproportionate burden of poverty. Children and youth, older people, people with disabilities, indigenous people, refugees and displaced persons are also particularly vulnerable to poverty.

It is commonly known that poverty in most developing countries, particularly those in Africa, is aggravated by, among other things, falling terms of trade for commodities, high tariffs for their exports, lack of resources, lack of appropriate technology and,

particularly, these countries' heavy external debt burden. There is an urgent need to relieve these countries — particularly the 33 sub-Saharan countries classified among the least developed countries — of their debt burden. We do not believe that rescheduling external debt will provide the answer. Debt cancellation is the only solution and, in this regard, we appeal to the Bretton Woods institutions and the major Western creditors to accelerate debt forgiveness.

We commend the Secretary-General's report, particularly paragraph 52 (a), which places emphasis on the need for the World Bank to avoid weakening existing, positive social capital and suggests that the Bank identify institutions in need of strengthening. In the same paragraph, the Bank is encouraged to invest directly in social capital through training and assistance for the capacity-building of local organizations.

SADC acknowledges that globalization and liberalization can have certain advantages. We are concerned, however, that currently only the rich, who also happen to be the minority, benefit. We wish to reiterate that, for the globalization and liberalization of the world economy to benefit all, developing countries must have free and unconditional access to the world markets, without which the marginalization of the developing countries will continue unabated. There can be no equality between unequal partners. It is therefore unfair to assume equal leverage when the playing field is grossly uneven. We are indeed gratified that the United Nations Development Programme's 1998 *Human Development Report* has acknowledged this factor.

SADC agrees with the view, expressed by the Group of 77 and China in their statement, that the recent financial crisis that has wrought havoc in Asia and reverberated throughout the world clearly illustrates the need for controls on financial markets and effective oversight.

Productive work and employment are the central elements of development. Full and appropriately remunerated employment is an effective method of combating poverty and promoting social integration. However, much unremunerated productive work — such as caring for children and the elderly, producing and preparing food for the family, protecting the environment and providing voluntary assistance to vulnerable and disadvantaged individuals and groups — is of great social importance. Thus, such work, although unremunerated, should be fully accorded the recognition it deserves, first

and foremost by the communities and individuals who are the direct beneficiaries of the services rendered.

The priority theme for the thirty-sixth session of the Commission for Social Development was "Promoting social integration and participation of all people, including disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and persons". The Commission unanimously agreed that social integration is best promoted in close harmony with efforts to expand productive employment and eradicate poverty, given their mutually reinforcing interrelationships. In this respect, allow me to share information on some of the efforts that SADC has taken to improve the human development goals of the people in our region. These efforts were focused on poverty alleviation, employment expansion and social integration.

First, in order to underline the importance the Community attaches to providing equal opportunities to its citizens, and in particular to the women within the Community, the SADC heads of State or Government, at their summit in Blantyre, Malawi, in September 1997, adopted a declaration on gender and development.

Secondly, SADC adopted a statement and a Plan of Action on HIV/AIDS for the Community and a policy on HIV/AIDS and employment.

Thirdly, SADC is developing a regional programme for demining to reinforce efforts being made at the national level. Hence, at the Blantyre summit in September 1997, the Community also adopted a declaration on anti-personnel landmines, entitled "Towards a Southern Africa Free of Anti-Personnel Landmines".

Fourthly, in order to promote regional integration, SADC is making steady progress in the establishment of a single economic space which will give the region more bargaining power in the global economy.

Fifthly, SADC is also proceeding with its regional integration and community-building programme, formally launched in 1993. To date, seven protocols have been concluded and signed in a number of areas. They include promoting the harmonization of national energy policies and the balanced, sustainable and equitable utilization of the region's energy resources. They also include shared watercourse systems to promote sound and sustainable development and management of international waters for the mutual benefit of all the riparian States. A water

sector has also been established to underscore the importance SADC attaches to the region's water resources.

Also included are transport, communications and meteorology to promote the harmonization of national transport policies and the cost-efficient management and operation of the region's transport and communications network, in order to support trade and investment in the region. Another area is combating illicit drug-trafficking through promoting a joint regional effort in combating the scourge of illicit drugs and preventing the use of southern Africa as a conduit for trafficking in illicit drugs destined for countries outside the southern African region. And, finally, these protocols include promoting intraregional and international trade.

The protocols have been signed and are in the process of being ratified by the SADC member States. Work is in progress to conclude protocols in other areas of cooperation. Notable among these is the food, agriculture and natural resources sector, for which a regional food security strategy and framework have been agreed upon. The strategy and framework underline poverty alleviation as a prime concern, and in particular address the issue of improving access to food, availability of food and food nutrition.

SADC welcomes the outcome of the first ministerial-level global meeting on youth, held in Lisbon, Portugal, from 8 to 12 August this year and hosted by the Government of Portugal in cooperation with the United Nations. We are encouraged that more than 160 States committed their Governments to placing national youth policy formulation, implementation, follow-up processes and funding at the highest political level. We call upon all Governments to translate their commitments into concrete actions in such areas as youth participation, development, peace, education and employment.

Let me take this opportunity to urge the relevant United Nations funds, programmes and agencies, international financial institutions and bilateral donors to continue promoting international awareness of the importance of the programme of the Social Summit and to mobilize the resources necessary to assist the SADC member States in building their capacity for carrying out their programmes. In this regard, the mandate of the Commission on Sustainable Development has to be broadened and strengthened in order to monitor the implementation of the Copenhagen Programme of Action.

In conclusion, SADC wants to add a word of caution: Poverty transcends boundaries and knows no immigration laws. Social disintegration cannot be indefinitely confined to ghettos or national borders. We appeal to the developed nations to render assistance to the developing countries and to enhance our regional endeavours in the provision of basic infrastructure and the requisite services. We believe that social development will be meaningful and durable if our collective efforts, from all spheres of society, are harnessed to achieve that goal. Let us not allow the lofty goals of the Social Summit to become meaningless promises to the world's poor and needy. In the view of SADC, Copenhagen must be the beginning and not the end.

Mr. Enkhsaikhan (Mongolia): At the outset, my delegation wishes to associate itself with the statement made earlier by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The World Summit for Social Development provided an invaluable opportunity to focus international attention on the core issues of poverty, unemployment and social integration. The Copenhagen Summit demonstrated that social development is indeed a question of global concern; therefore, the implementation of its decisions naturally acquires special significance.

In the three years since the Social Summit, there have been encouraging signs of progress in fulfilling the commitments taken by Governments at the Summit and in creating the conditions for reducing poverty and unemployment and encouraging comprehensive social integration. At both national and international levels, there have been many encouraging examples of both policy formulations and concrete actions reflecting a stronger commitment by Member States to social development.

My delegation welcomes the results of the special session of the Economic and Social Council devoted to the integrated and coordinated implementation and follow-up of major United Nations conferences and summits, as well as the work of the Preparatory Committee for the special session of the General Assembly, concerning the implementation of the outcome of the Summit. Likewise, we welcome the established practice of holding panel discussions on the priority issues as an important and innovative input in the deliberations.

More concretely, my delegation sees great value in the work of the Administrative Committee on Coordination to organically integrate the internationally agreed programmes into national policies and actions. It also highly evaluates the work of the Commission for Social Development and the newly created Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

Mongolia, like many other countries undergoing fundamental changes, has been grappling with the challenges of transition for the past seven and a half years. Market reforms have been boldly accelerated by liberalization of trade and prices, large-scale privatization and other economic measures. However, the reform process has not been without difficulties. The inherited burdens of a weak financial system and inefficient State enterprises, coupled with a lack of free market traditions, have compounded the reform challenge.

To adequately address the above problems, the Government of Mongolia has been taking a host of measures designed to reduce poverty and unemployment and improve the living standards of the most vulnerable segments of the society. Thus, in June 1994, it launched a six-year multisectoral National Poverty Alleviation Programme (NPAP), aimed at effective mobilization and utilization of both national and external resources to reduce the portion of the population living in poverty to less than 10 per cent by the year 2000. This would be done, *inter alia*, by the revival of the national economy, promotion of productive employment, creation of jobs, improvements in health and education and the advancement of women as full partners in development.

Allow me to speak briefly about the implementation of the NPAP, which started in late 1994 with 65 pilot projects in selected provinces and districts. The projects include the build-up of institutional framework, both at the local and national levels; creation of fund mechanisms; establishment of project formulation, appraisal, selection and implementation procedures; adoption of operational guidelines; training of personnel; and so on.

The nationwide implementation of NPAP was launched in March 1996. By June of this year, six cycles of projects, each requiring an implementation period of three to four months, had been completed. The NPAP activities undertaken within and outside the Poverty Alleviation Fund mechanisms include the following: public works projects to develop and strengthen local infrastructure providing short-term employment to the unemployed and the poor; basic education projects to

substantially reduce school dropout and non-enrolment rates as well as to renovate school buildings and school heating systems in rural areas; rural health projects to help the rural health services restore and maintain their ability to provide primary health care; pre-school strengthening projects to improve the quality of and access to pre-school education by improving the developmental and cognitive skills of school entrants; and support projects for the disabled to create wider employment opportunities for them by supplying training equipment and learning materials to the institutions engaged in their training and education.

United Nations agencies play an active role in the implementation of NPAP. From the very inception of the NPAP, the United Nations Development Programme has been assisting the Government in resource mobilization and in adopting a coordinated approach by the United Nations system and the donor community to poverty alleviation in Mongolia.

The United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Children's Fund, the World Health Organization and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization support our policy of improving reproductive and primary health care, immunization, safe motherhood, control of meningitis and respiratory infections, improvement of education and so forth. I would like to note that the United Nations Volunteers also play an important role in NPAP activities.

It should be pointed out that the United Nations system's operational activities have been consistent with our country's needs and our Government's priorities. The assistance and support programmes of the United Nations system have been drawn up in full collaboration with the Government and have focused on the areas where its comparative advantage is most effective and feasible.

The NPAP is being implemented in close coordination with the Mongolian Action Programme for the Twenty-First Century, the Population Policy of Mongolia and the National Programme of Action for the Advancement of Women, all of which have been adopted as follow-up measures to the Rio, Cairo and Beijing conferences. It is also being implemented in coordination with the National Employment Generation Programme of 1996.

My delegation is happy to announce that the Government of Mongolia is launching, in close partnership with the United Nations family bodies

stationed in Mongolia and with non-governmental organizations, a One World Conference Series project, aimed at ensuring a national and international integrated follow-up to the world conferences and summits held in the early 1990s.

To commemorate this year as "the year of the youth", the Government of Mongolia and the United Nations system agreed on five areas of cooperation on critical youth issues. This innovative process, and the resulting memorandum of understanding agreement, will, we hope, positively affect the nation's youth situation in the next millennium.

In order to celebrate the International Year of Older Persons next year, the Mongolian Government recently established a National Preparatory Committee for celebration of the Year and will launch a series of supportive activities.

The current decline in official development assistance and in contributions to the United Nations core resources is a matter of concern for Mongolia, as it is for other Member States. As a developing landlocked country with weak financial resources, at present Mongolia relies to some extent on external resources for development. My delegation welcomes the cost-sharing practices in the United Nations system's operational activities and would like to re-emphasize the need to increase core resources on a predictable, continuous and assured basis. It also favours increased non-core and earmarked funding, as well as the mobilization of private sector support.

In conclusion, may I express my delegation's sincere hope that the ongoing deliberations on the implementation of the outcome of the Social Summit will help to generate renewed political will at the national and international levels to attain the noble objectives of ensuring sustainable human development.

Mr. Babaa (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*interpretation from Arabic*): I should like to express my support for all the points made by the representative of Indonesia, speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, in which he discussed the problems of the developing countries, the challenges they face, and various matters relating to economic and social development, in particular the importance of reactivating the North-South and South-South dialogues and the need for North-South and South-South cooperation as a way of promoting participation in the attainment of the objectives of the World Summit for Social

Development. I should also like to add one or two remarks of my own.

The outcome of the World Summit for Social Development, held in Copenhagen in 1995, reflected the interest of the international community in human development. Humanity is both the axis and the end of development. The outcome emphasized that the achievement of social development in any society requires the eradication of poverty, the creation of employment opportunities, the reduction of unemployment, and attainment of social integration for the good of the individual, and for the creation of opportunity to participate in development and decision-making.

Despite the efforts that have been and are still being made by the developing countries to achieve the objectives set out in the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and Programme of Action, the actual progress achieved remains minimal. The poor are getting poorer. More than a billion people are living in extreme poverty, especially in Africa, which has the largest number of the poor. Most of these are suffering from unemployment, underdevelopment, social injustice and a lack of the most elementary health and education services, food, drinking water and housing. This is true despite the fact that it has been three years since the Copenhagen Programme of Action was adopted.

The developing countries have a special and urgent responsibility to confront the monopolies whose imposition is fostered under the name of globalization and its slogans: The transformation of their industries and financial institutions into satellite industries and institutions and the imposition of controls over their raw materials with regard to production, distribution, and pricing. This has all greatly harmed these countries, and the damage will be even greater if they do not adopt adequate formulas for eradicating the negative effects of globalization and for a fundamental review of the Bretton Woods institutions. Such a review should be an element of these requisite formulas.

Whereas we recognize that the primary responsibility for social development falls to the States themselves, the existence of a just and appropriate international economic, social and political environment is a fundamental condition for the promotion of international cooperation to consolidate the efforts of the developing countries in the sphere of their own social development. This will require the developed countries, the international financial institutions and the United

Nations development agencies to fulfil the commitments which they undertook at the Copenhagen Summit. Such compliance includes the provision of adequate financial resources and the necessary development assistance for development plans and programmes in the developing countries, aimed at eliminating poverty and unemployment and at supporting social integration, while providing for food, security and the evolution of education and health services.

In view of the close linkages between economic and social development, the deterioration of the economic situation of many developing countries has negatively affected their social development. The continuation of Africa's critical economic situation and debt burden requires the international community to affirm its commitment to resolving the problems of that African continent, to finding radical solutions to its debt problem, and to helping its economies to diversify and to gain access to the markets of the developed countries. They must also be provided with the financial resources necessary to enhance their development and to market their exports at equitable and just prices.

In this regard, my delegation wishes to affirm the need for the current reform process in the United Nations to deal with the Organization's capacity to address the issues of development in the developing countries and to enable them effectively to meet their needs and to finance their development programmes. Here, I would refer in particular to the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s.

Human and economic development requires peace and justice. Peace calls for a level of development that provides the citizen with his basic needs. Measures of economic coercion, which some developed countries impose on some developing countries with a view to exerting political and economic pressure on them, as well as attempts to impose their national legislation extraterritorially run counter to the principles of development and peace. This requires the entire international community to take effective measures to eliminate such measures.

On the basis of my country's full commitment to the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development, we have adopted a number of economic and social measures and policies aimed at guaranteeing the optimum use of our human resources and improving the economic and social conditions of all members of society under the umbrella of legislative and legal guarantees that take account of the need for balance

between the interests of the individual and of society. These measures also include the promotion of human rights in the Jamahiriya society based upon full participation in decision-making. The development plans of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya place priority on the development of programmes of education, training, free health services, and social security given free of charge to widows, the elderly, the disabled and the needy.

However, the progress achieved by my country in the area of human development faces a serious setback due to the coercive measures and the sanctions unjustly imposed on the Libyan Arab people. Their negative effects have extended to impeding development programmes and plans intended to improve the infrastructures of the country. This constitutes a blatant violation of the right to development and of all human rights guaranteed by international instruments, and a flagrant violation of the provision of human rights covenants.

In conclusion, my delegation supports the holding of a special session of the General Assembly in the year 2000 to undertake a comprehensive review and evaluation of the outcome of the implementation of the World Summit for Social Development. This offers an opportunity to further the objectives of the conference while evaluating progress achieved in the implementation of its Programme of Action, and to adopt further initiatives aiming at the formulation of a long-range strategy at the national, regional and international levels to promote human development. We hope that the Preparatory Committee for that special session will be able to prepare well for it in terms of organization and content. We would also like to reaffirm our delegation's cooperation with that Committee in order to enable it to accomplish its task in the best possible manner.

Mr. Dausá Céspedes (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): First of all I would like to say that my delegation is happy to share the views put forward by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

More than three years have passed since the World Summit for Social Development, which consolidated recognition of the fact that the individual is the subject and the end of all development policies and strategies at the national and global levels. There is now international recognition of the urgent need to resolve such serious problems as poverty, unemployment and social marginalization which still prevail in the world.

Nevertheless, this important world event was only the beginning of a long and difficult path which is becoming increasingly complex because of the inevitable and unstoppable phenomenon of globalization which, combined with the delicate state of the world economy at this end of century, threatens the world with a global economic crisis with incalculable consequences and which is already hitting several developing countries and millions of people around the world.

The progress of this neo-liberal globalization which some are trying to impose on the world goes hand in hand with growth in poverty and social polarization. It is undeniable that in the 1990s there has been an unprecedented widening of the huge gap between the rich and the poor. There has been a disturbing increase in levels of unemployment and social disintegration, postponing increasingly the attainment of the noble goals of social justice included in the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action.

On the threshold the new millennium, more than 1,313 million people live today below the poverty line. Of those, 80 per cent live in countries of the developing world. Eighty per cent of worldwide production is concentrated in the countries with developed economies, where only 16 per cent of the world population live, while more than 84 per cent of the world population live in the developing countries.

About 30 per cent of the population of developing countries, 1,300 million people, do not have access to drinking water. In the developing countries the infant mortality rate up to the age of five exceeds 100 per 1,000 live births, and 89 per 1,000 live births up to the age of one. Life expectancy at birth in developing countries fluctuates between 50 and 60 years. About 600 million persons will not survive to age 40 in 1998. 1,450 million adults are illiterate. Thus, there are innumerable challenges and obstacles as we strive to achieve social development, and the international community must make every effort to advance towards a world with economic, political and social stability.

Globalization will not be viable if it continues to pursue the narrow aims of a small number of industrialized countries, multinational corporations and international institutions controlled by them. The persistence and seriousness of a large number of economic, social and environmental problems make it necessary to promote an awareness of the desirability of transforming international relations with a view to creating a new kind of cooperation

as the only way to solve the burning problems afflicting the overwhelming majority of the world population and to make our world a stable and liveable place.

Special mention should be made of the difficult situation relating to the international mobilization of resources for development. This can only be viewed as an integral process between the economic and social areas. Official development assistance has declined over the past five years, according to World Bank figures. Not only has the dollar gone down in value, but many developed donor countries continue to give less than the goal of 0.7 per cent of their gross domestic product, while that same group of countries designates approximately 3 per cent for military expenditures, which is inconceivable in the light of the so-called end of the cold war.

Official assistance can and must be supplemented by other ways of mobilizing resources and by specific structural changes in the developing economies. However, this assistance, together with changes in the present international order, must continue to be fundamental components of the strategy to achieve development.

The external debt burden continues to stifle a significant number of developing countries. The proposed relief measures in many cases are accompanied by the imposition of reform programmes and structural adjustments whose negative effects on the people of the debtor countries have contributed to creating explosive social situations in some of these countries.

The African countries continue to require special attention, including those in the group of the least developed countries. For this group of nations, recent developments have been significantly negative.

The political will of States continues to be the key to the resolution of the complex and distressing panorama before us. The resources to resolve these problems exist, but they are wasted in unbridled prosperity and in the arms race. If we do not build an international environment which allows for economic growth and sustained development, it will be almost impossible, particularly for the great majority of the countries of the third world, to progress without interruption along the path of social development.

Allow me to express appreciation for the outcome of our efforts to coordinate the follow-up to the Copenhagen

Summit, as well as our hope to achieve even greater things in the future.

Cuba is honoured to welcome the outcome of the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the special session of the General Assembly to be devoted to reviewing, five years later, the commitments assumed at the World Social Summit in Copenhagen.

In the last 40 years, Cuba has planned out and put into practice, with significant results, development policies and strategies based on a more just and equitable distribution of wealth.

In that way, we have achieved the following: 100 per cent of the population has access to health services and free education; life expectancy at birth is now 74.7 years; the infant mortality rate is now only 7.2 per 1,000 births; 100 per cent of Cuban children are protected by vaccinations against 11 preventable diseases; we have one doctor for every 176 inhabitants of the island; and 97.4 per cent of children between the ages of 6 and 14 go to school. These are just a few of the indicators that could be mentioned.

In spite of my country's difficult economic situation, which has been aggravated by the tightening of the illegal economic commercial and financial blockade imposed by the Government of the United States and repeatedly rejected by the General Assembly, Cuba continues to pursue a programme of economic and social development aimed at improving the well-being of the people, a programme characterized by the most profound humanitarian feeling. This has been possible, above all, because we have never abandoned what are, for Cuba, the pillars of our social and economic development — namely, our independence and sovereignty — and because all the efforts of the past 40 years have been focused on human beings and the enhancement of their dignity.

The fact that we have preserved the most important social benefits achieved over decades, under circumstances that are so abnormal and complex, underscores the idea that within a framework of social justice and equitable distribution of wealth, it is possible to meet certain basic social development goals in situations of scant economic growth and even decline. The infrastructure created during the past decades, the implementation of policies of applied social protection, creativity and the participation of the people in this effort have allowed Cuba not only to preserve the principal social successes we have achieved but even to enhance them in many cases.

It will be the my country's great privilege and honour to host the South Summit to be held in the year 2000, an event that arises out of the urgent need for all of the developing countries to prepare jointly to face the challenges of the new millennium and to endeavour to ward off the cruel reality that is advancing on humanity, in which backwardness and poverty, unhealthy conditions, hunger and illness are constantly gaining ground from well-being and the full realization of humanity's potential.

As ever, Cuba is prepared to share its experiences and participate actively in whatever efforts are made by the international community to bring about the implementation of the commitments undertaken at the Copenhagen Summit and to move towards a world of true social justice for all.

Mr. Babar (Pakistan): At the outset, my delegation wishes to associate itself with the statement made by Indonesia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

My delegation is grateful to the Secretary-General for his reports on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development. We also welcome the various initiatives of Governments and non-governmental organizations to achieve the goals of the Social Summit.

One of the major achievements of the Copenhagen Summit was the recognition of human beings as the main actors and beneficiaries of the development process. It was realized that people should be given opportunities to participate fully in development activities and to receive a fair distribution of their fruits. However, despite concerted efforts over the last three years, the goals of social development envisaged in Copenhagen largely remain unimplemented. The situation has been further exacerbated by the downturn of the global economy, resulting in an increase in unemployment, particularly in the developing countries.

Unemployment and poverty, both human and economic, are the major challenges confronting the developing countries. Unemployment and underdevelopment generate social unrest and undermine cohesion and stability. Unemployment in many cases is a major cause of political instability in various parts of the world. The International Labour Organization has estimated that approximately 1 billion people — about 30 per cent of the entire global labour force — are either unemployed or underemployed. It should be our

collective endeavour to draw upon this enormous human resource and benefit from these people's contribution to development.

Poverty generates deprivation. It reflects denial of choices and opportunities. The 1998 report of the United Nations Development Programme has estimated that approximately 1.3 billion people — almost a quarter of world's population — live below the poverty line of one dollar a day; well over 1 billion people are deprived of basic consumption needs; out of 4.4 billion people living in developing countries, approximately three fifths lack basic sanitation; one third have no access to clean water; one quarter do not have adequate housing; one fifth do not have enough dietary energy and protein; over 1.94 billion are anaemic; and one fifth have no access to modern medical services.

The recent South-East Asian economic crisis threatens to push more than 50 million people into poverty in one country alone. The social costs of one-dimensional globalization are too high for the developing countries. This calls for urgent action by the international community.

The prevalence of social unrest, violence and armed conflicts in various parts of the world have also added to the economic deprivation and the deepening of poverty and social disintegration of societies. South Asia is one such region, where continued conflicts and tensions remain a major cause of poverty and economic backwardness.

We hope that the Preparatory Committee for the special session, which started its work in May of this year, will undertake a detailed evaluation of the world social situation. We also hope that it will give special consideration to the core problems of poverty, unemployment and social exclusion for inclusion in the priority themes of the special session. The Preparatory Committee also needs to consider the impact of globalization and the stabilization of the financial markets, as they directly affect developing countries' endeavours for achieving sustained economic growth and social development.

Pakistan has taken a number of policy initiatives to implement its Copenhagen commitments. To create a conducive economic environment, we have accelerated our economic liberalization programme by introducing reforms in the corporate, banking and financial sectors. Maximum tariff rates have been reduced; most import restrictions have been withdrawn. Investors, both Pakistani and

foreign, can now invest in Pakistan without governmental approval, except in a few specified areas.

We believe that transparency in governance constitutes a prerequisite for the creation of a suitable economic environment. Pakistan has accordingly established an Independent Accountability Commission, headed by a retired judge of the Supreme Court, to deal with corrupt elements in the highest echelons of authority and to ensure probity in public life. This has helped in efforts to eradicate corruption from public life to make the governance fully accountable. Recently, a freedom of information law has also been enforced to ensure that information on governance becomes available to all segments of society so as to encourage participatory and transparent governance. Efforts are also under way to establish an environmental protection authority to ensure compliance with national environmental quality standards.

As a modest effort to tackle the twin menaces of poverty and unemployment, Pakistan has launched a five-year Social Action Programme, with an outlay of 500 billion rupees. The main focus of this programme will be on poverty alleviation, education, primary health care, population welfare, rural water supply and sanitation programmes. Employment generation, environmental protection, the empowerment of women, the decentralization of management and enhancing community participation have also been included in the framework of the Social Action Programme.

Pakistan also plans to generate 5.72 million additional employment opportunities through its eighth five-year plan encouraging private investment in labour-intensive industry and expanding agriculture and informal sectors. The focus on employment generation will also continue in the next five-year plan.

Pakistan believes that no society can achieve the objective of true development without the full and equal participation of women. The Constitution of Pakistan ensures equal opportunities and equal rights for all citizens without any discrimination on the basis of caste, creed, religion or gender. Pakistan has already ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. Various legislative, judicial and administrative processes have been initiated to bring the laws into conformity with the provisions of the Convention. The Women's Commission of Inquiry, which was headed by a sitting judge of the Supreme Court, has already submitted its findings to the Government to expedite this process. To bridge the

existing disparity in the job market, the Government has decided to give preference to women candidates in all future recruitment under the Social Action Programme.

Pakistan has also taken steps to eliminate all forms of child labour. A National Commission on Child Welfare and Development has been created in the Ministry of Social Welfare. The Commission formulates policies and coordinates activities of provincial institutions working for the welfare and development of the child. The 1995 Compulsory Education Act has been enforced in the Punjab province. Other provinces are formulating similar laws. The by-laws under the 1991 Employment of the Child Act have been finalized and are being enforced effectively. A Child Offenders Act, which provides for the rehabilitation of juvenile delinquents and bans the death penalty for young offenders, is already in the process of being enacted.

As its modest contribution to the development of Africa and the least developed countries, Pakistan has an

ongoing Africa Technical Assistance Programme. Under this programme, Pakistan provides technical assistance in the form of training courses, donations and expert services to least developed countries in various fields. Pakistan also offers scholarships in medicine, engineering and dentistry to students from least developed countries. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is providing training facilities to professionals from African countries in the field of language and diplomacy.

The steady decline in external aid creates enormous difficulties for developing countries to sustain their efforts pursuant to the objectives of the Social Summit. Pakistan, as a developing country, is no exception to this rule. We hope that developed countries will honour their commitments by earmarking 0.7 per cent of their gross national product for official development assistance. This would go a long way towards realizing the goals we agreed upon in Copenhagen.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.